



S W E D I S H
COLLEGIUM
for ADVANCED STUDY

The 5th Wittrock Lecture &
Panel Discussion

16 February, 2023

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The Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS) kindly invites you to attend the **5th Wittrock Lecture**, and the following **panel discussion** on Thursday, **16 February 2023**.

Venue: the Thunberg Lecture Hall, SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala

Programme

9:30 - 10:15

Registration & Coffee/tea

10:15 - 12:00

The 5th Wittrock Lecture:

FREDRIK LOGEVALL, Laurence D. Belfer Professor of International Affairs, Harvard University
Writing a Political Life: On the Challenging Relationship Between Biography and History
Introduction: **CHRISTINA GARSTEN**, SCAS

14:15 - 16:00

Panel Discussion:

The Promise and Peril of Biography

HENRIK BERGGREN, CARINA BURMAN, FREDRIK LOGEVALL, ANNA WILLIAMS

Moderator: **MIKAEL ADOLPHSON**, SCAS

Pre-registration is required. The number of seats is limited and seats will be distributed on a first come, first served basis. Register for the event no later than 9 February 2023 at:

www.swedishcollegium.se/Wittrock_Lecture/WittrockLecture_PanelDiscussion_2023.html

The Wittrock lecture and the panel discussion will also be available via Zoom Webinar:

<https://uu-se.zoom.us/j/61718547470>

Warmly welcome!



The 5th Wittrock Lecture:

FREDRIK LOGEVALL, Laurence D. Belfer Professor of International Affairs, Harvard University

Writing a Political Life: On the Challenging Relationship Between Biography and History

ABSTRACT:

The relationship between biography and history is complex. No attempt at a “life and times” study can offer the full person or the full society; instead, the work must strive to illuminate the point at which they overlap. This requires difficult choices, requires balancing agency and structure at every stage of the process and taking care to not let the context overwhelm the individual life. For the political biographer, there are additional challenges, concerning the nature of power and how to assess it. To what extent do leaders make history, and to what extent are they constrained by time and space, by circumstances beyond their control? And how to write political biography that does not distort the past by falsely insinuating that history is made only by the rich and powerful? In this the fifth Wittrock Lecture, Fredrik Logevall will consider these and other questions central to the task of “Writing a Political Life.”

ABOUT FREDRIK LOGEVALL:

A specialist on U.S. foreign relations history and 20th century international history, Logevall is the author or editor of ten books, most recently *JFK: Coming of Age in the American Century, 1917–1956* (Random House, 2020), which won the Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography and was a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year. His book *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (Random House, 2012), won the Pulitzer Prize for History and the Francis Parkman Prize, as well as the American Library in Paris Book Award and the Arthur Ross Book Award from the Council on Foreign Relations. His other recent works include *America's Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (with Campbell Craig; Belknap/Harvard, 2020), and *A People and A Nation: A History of the United States* (with Jane Kamensky et al.; 11th ed., Cengage, 2018).

Logevall's essays and reviews have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Times* (UK), *The New Republic*, *Politico*, *Daily Beast*, the *London Review of Books*, and *Foreign Affairs*, among other publications. A native of Stockholm, Sweden, he is a past president of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Society of American Historians. During his time as a Fellow in residence at SCAS in the autumn of 2022, he worked on the second and final volume of his JFK biography.

Panel Discussion:

The Promise and Peril of Biography

HENRIK BERGGREN, CARINA BURMAN, FREDRIK LOGEVALL, ANNA WILLIAMS

Biography continues to be immensely popular with the reading public. Among academics, however, it is often viewed with suspicion, on account of its supposed tendency to view the subject in isolation from the larger forces, trends, currents, systems, and structures in which he or she operated. How, then, should we view the biographical enterprise? Are there rules of the genre? Pitfalls to be mindful of? A distinguished panel of authors will examine these and other questions.

Historian, journalist and writer **Henrik Berggren**, PhD, is the author of *Dag Hammarskjöld – Markings of His Life* (2016) and *Underbara dagar framför oss: En biografi över Olof Palme* (2010) as well as several books on Swedish society and international relations during the 20th century, most recently *Landet utanför*, a series of books on Sweden and WWII (2018–2021).

Author and researcher (docent) in Literature **Carina Burman** has written more than 20 books, including biographies of Carl Michael Bellman (2019) and Fredrika Bremer (2001). Her fictional works often involve extensive biographical research, most recently in the novel *God natt Madame* (2021), based on the life of 18th-century noble woman Anna Charlotta von Stapelmohr.

Fredrik Logevall, Laurence D. Belfer Professor of International Affairs and Professor of History at Harvard University is the author of *JFK: Coming of Age in the American Century, 1917–1956* (2020), the first part of a two-volume biography of John F. Kennedy. His *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* won the Pulitzer Prize for history in 2013.

Anna Williams is Professor of Literature at Uppsala University and the author of two literary biographies, *Diktardjättat – Lotten von Kræmers litteraturliv* (2022) and *Från verklighetens stränder – Agnes von Krusenstjernas liv och diktning* (2013). She is currently Chair of the literary society Samfundet De Nio.

If you have any questions regarding the event, please contact: info@swedishcollegium.se

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